

Muslim Activism in Sri Lanka: The Historical Trajectory of the Contentious Politics of Separate Muslim Identity Construction

IHJAS Mohamed Meeran

スリランカのムスリム行動主義： 別々のムスリムアイデンティティ構築の争議的政治の歴史

イジャス モハメド ミラン

要 旨

アイデンティティは社会に構築され、行動や演説の中で生産され、再現される。

同様に、アイデンティティは政治的・制度的条件によって形成され、政治的権力、物質的資源、代表権へのアクセスのための集団動員の基礎として用いられる。

スリランカでは、別々のイスラムアイデンティティの構築が様々な時点（エピソード）で進展し、「流体非タミル」イスラム教徒のアイデンティティから「固定非タミル」イスラム教徒のアイデンティティへの様々なアイデンティティの層を生み出している。しかし、イスラム教徒のアイデンティティ構築に関する実証的な文献では、別々のイスラム教徒のアイデンティティ形成の軌跡を捉える際の政治的・制度的背景の役割と影響についてはほとんど注目されていない。その結果、「流体非タミル」イスラム教徒のアイデンティティから「固定非タミル」イスラム教徒のアイデンティティへの転換における重要な分岐点であるシンハラ・タミル紛争のような重要な社会的政治的文脈は、依然として過小評価され、説明されないままである。したがって、本論文では2つの研究課題に答えることを試みる。別々の民族宗教的アイデンティティのためのイスラムの行動が異なる政治的文脈の下で形作られた方法。非タミルイスラム教徒のアイデンティティが、特につかみどころのないままであったという事実を考えると、特に20世紀後半に「個体なカテゴリー」になった理由。



Table of Contents

I. INTRODUCTION	
II. DESIGN OF THE STUDY	
III. THE MUSLIMS OF SRI LANKA: A BRIEF SOCIO-ETHNOLOGICAL PROFILE	
IV. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY	
V. POLITICAL AND INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT PREVAILED AND ITS IMPACT ON SEPARATE MUSLIM IDENTITY	
VI. THE EMERGENCE OF SLMC AND THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE MUSLIM IDENTITY	
VII. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION	
VIII. CONCLUSION	

I. INTRODUCTION

Identities are socially constructed, and they are produced and reproduced in actions and speech. Similarly, identities are, political process perspective to ethnic mobilization suggests, shaped by the political and institutional environment (the political opportunity structure) and the dominant discursive context as they are used as a basis for mobilization in search of access to political power, material resources, and the control of representation (Vermeersch 2011). In Sri Lanka, as the empirical literature suggests, the construction and mobilization of the Muslim identity progressed through different periods (episodes) characterizing different socio-economic and political contexts, producing varieties of separate Muslim identity (Imtiyas and Hoole 2011; Ali 1981; MaGilvary 1998; Nuhman2007). The empirical literature on the three major periods (episodes)-the British colonialism, the post-independence and the civil war era- however, is obscure the role and impact of the specific political and institutional environment on the shaping and reshaping of the Muslim identity specifically in the context of the Sinhala-Tamil ethnic conflict, a watershed in the history of separate Muslim identity construction and ensuing Muslim identity politics in Sri Lanka. This paper, therefore, seeks to analyze Muslim activism for separate identity construction and mobilization in Sri Lanka. In so doing, it pays particular focus on the various periods (episodes) marked by construction and deconstruction of the different character of Muslim identity under different socio-economic and political circumstances throughout its century-long history. Furthermore, also to explain why the separate Muslim identity shifted from traditional “fluid non-Tamilness” character to “solid nonTamilness ” character particularly during the context of Tamil-Sinhala civil war in the late twentieth century. As the present study involves the evolving nexus between collective (identity) action and the political system, the most widely used apparatus in the study of this relationship, the political process theories featuring the Political Opportunity Structure (POS), is invoked.

The contentious politics literature suggests that the identities of contentious actors are activated and changed through interaction between actors that are crystallized during “trouble times” –episodes of contention or critical juncture (as quoted in Sydney Tarrow 2013, 142). Given the Muslim identity (ethnoreligious or non-Tamil identity) construction in Sri Lanka, as a process, it had evolved through various episodes (mainly three) in terms of different political contexts existed during its century-long existence(McGilvary 1998, 435 and 2016,62; Spencer 2012,728). As a political action, the first episode of

the construction of separate Muslim identity- nonTamil Moorish identity- marked its coming during the early decades of the British colonial rule when the community faced with political and intellectual challenge from the Tamils over former's political representation(McGilvary 2011,51;McGilvary and Raheem 2011,415-16; McGilvary1998, 449; Holt 2016, 11). However, soon, the challenge turned to a perceived threat when the Tamils repeatedly attempted to deprive the Muslims of their political representation and thus marginalizing them from politics and economic activities by resorting to various measures. The public intellectual repudiation and entering a political alliance with majority Sinhalese, among others, were the common strategy pursued by the Tamils that threatened the Muslim community politically and economically. With the increased challenge from the Tamils to the political existence of the Muslims compelled the latter to either modify or reinvent their ethnic identity to suit the need of the hour. This became very evident when the Muslims opted the "pan Muslim" identity over the particularistic "Moorish" one in the wake of anti-Muslim violence in 1915 during which "Tamil threat" became quite evident in light of their attempt to defend the Sinhalese leaders/perpetrators. Nevertheless, Tamils challenge (vociferously claiming Muslims are Tamils ethnically and ethnologically for simply the former also speak Tamil) continued in the same vein throughout the decades up until the late 1980s when the Muslim identity finally became a more solid and monolithic category.

On the other side, the deliberate and forceful attempt made by Muslim elite to maintain a separate Muslim identity with particular emphasis on its non-Tamil character during and after the British colonial rule produced fluid and fragile category. This category while enabled bringing all the Muslim members under one solid category along the religious line, suffered a setback to do so on the linguistic and cultural lines, thus creating the state of an identity crisis (Mohan 1987). However, the identity that was moulded during the third 'trouble time', a period between the late 1980s and early 1990s, alongside the political activism and electoral performance of the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress(SLMC) exhibits relatively coherent and consistent facet of the Muslim identity particularly in terms of the linguistic and cultural bond. This, in turn, rendered the identity to become 'the ethnic other' category, making it a 'hard category' with external boundary formed. The shift of Muslim political leadership from southwest to northeast was a watershed event which drastically reduced the hitherto gulf between the Muslims from both these regions in terms of culture, region and language which long remained elusive to be bridged by the identity moulded in the previous attempts.

Therefore, given the understanding held by the contentious politics literature, identities are crystallized during the 'troubled times' and the fact that the process of (non-Tamil) Muslim identity construction had passed through three 'trouble time' in different time period (colonial, early independence decades and late 20th century), the process of Muslim identity construction as a whole runs on the contrary to the very understanding of the literature. This is the point of departure which warrants a fresh systematic investigation to unearth why the (non-Tamil) Muslim identity become a hard category only in the third 'trouble time'(the late 1980s) and why it was not so in the first and second 'times'. This, in turn, helps us capture the major trajectory features of the separate Muslim identity construction and consolidation

To ensure a systematic investigation of the phenomenon, the present paper is organized into five sections; **first one** deals with the introduction. **The second one** involves the research design. **The third one** relates to the historical development of Muslim identity. **The fourth one** concerns the background of the study, including a review of the past studies on Muslim

identity construction in Sri Lanka and the contemporary status of the Muslim identity. **The fifth one** concerns the factors influencing Muslim activism for separate ethnoreligious identity. **The sixth one** involves data analysis and conclusion.

II. DESIGN OF THE STUDY

a. Methodology

Framework of analysis

The framework of analysis adopted for the study serves two purposes. While it provides the parameters for analysis of the key concepts the study deals with, underpins the data analysis and subsequent data interpretation.

As this study involves ethnic identity formation and mobilization in varying socio-economic and political contexts characterizing shift of regime/political system from one type to another, it presupposes ethnic/group identity construction is social and institutional process influenced mainly by formal and informal politics. To embark on the analysis of the phenomenon of Muslim identity construction in Sri Lanka vis-à-vis different types of socio-economic and political setting, the Political Opportunity Structure (POS), which is one of the central analytical concepts of the political process approach to identity mobilization is deployed along with the social constructionist conceptual model of group identity formation.

Therefore, the primary outcome of interest of the study that why Muslim identity(non-Tamil) became a 'hard category' particularly in the late 20th century will be analyzed by drawing attention to the different political contexts that affected the shaping and reshaping of the Muslim identity over a century-long period.

Data gathering Method

As the present study is based purely on the desk review, the data required for the successful execution of the study was obtained by accessing online and virtual archives, libraries and other repositories. As for the particular materials used to extract the data and evidence required for the study, it mainly involves scholarly written books, journal articles, unpublished postgraduate theses (MA & PhD), reports and magazine articles.

Scope of the Study

As a process, the Muslim identity construction is dynamic and has a long span of existence which is still on. However, given the time constraint and purpose of the investigation alike, the present study set the scope to cover only the institutional dimension/aspects of the political action that the process of Muslim identity construction warranted. In doing so, the study focused the attention to three specific periods (British Colonial, early independence decades and later 20th century) which the empirical literature on the subject of Muslim identity formation treats as the turning points in the shaping of the Muslim identity (non-Tamil). As such, the study consciously paid no attention to the likely development and changes that occurred around the Muslim identity afterwards (from 2000 onward).

b. CONCEPTUALIZATION OF KEY ANALYTICAL CONCEPTS

Identity Construction Defined

The term identity construction is employed in the present study entails mainly two things; First, construction of the content of a social category, such as making Muslims believe that Muslims cannot get along with Tamils and vice versa(at least religiously and culturally). Second, construction of boundary rules such as making Muslims believe that they are non-Tamil. As for the overall outcome of interest of the study is the construction of Muslim identity, particularly the non-Tamilness label attached to it. To put it other way, why the attempt at constructing the non-Tamil Muslim identity produced different labels (from pure 'Arab' to 'Moorish' to 'Muslim') at a different time in point (episode) over the century-long period of its existence-activism?

The major outcome of interest that the construction of Muslim identity producing a 'hard category' of the 'non-Tamilness' identity can be conceptually explained by contextualizing the denotational meaning of the term 'hard category'. Accordingly, 'hard category' is understood to mean the following;

- a. Reduction in fluidity and overlapping relations of the Muslim identity with other competing identities: In the case of the present study, it is the 'Tamilness' identity in an attempt to access to political power, material resources and control of representation.
- b. Solid membership rules and content (behaviour): This implies the label carrying Muslims identify themselves only as of the member of that identity and not that 'Tamilness' category entirely or partly in light of language they speak or the culture and customs they observe/practice. Similarly, members of Muslim identity expose a particular behavioural pattern in terms of politics, including elections, culture and larger lifestyle.
- c. A strict boundary is drawn/formed: Whoever carries the label of Muslim identity should fall within the boundary, which is primarily drawn along religion, politics and culture. As for the politics, Members of the 'Muslimness' category should predominantly identify them with SLMC either by being members/cadres or voting in elections.
- d. Break with past rituals and practices: This involves the established and unestablished rituals and practices mainly in the socio-cultural field at a group and communal levels rather than individual level. For instance, marriage ceremonies, religious festival, dress code.
- e. Singularity: This indicates the state of unity in diversity. That is the Muslim community as a whole is a composite of main groups and sub- groups in terms of region, class and denomination. Moreover, demobilizing the parochial subgroup identities and labels to construct common objective identity markers such as adherence to the Islamic faith, recognizing SLMC as the Muslim communal party.

Ethnic identity defined

Ethnic identities are understood to be defined mainly by descent rules of group membership and content typically composed of cultural attributes, such as religion, languages, cultures, and shared historical myths (Fearon and Laitin 2000). The ethnic identity of a group consists of its subjective, symbolic, or emblematic use of any aspect of a culture, or a perceived separate origin and continuity in order to differentiate themselves from other groups. In time, these emblems can be imposed from outside or embraced from within (Ros and Devo 1995)

Muslim activism defined

Activism is today a global phenomenon (Gellner, 2009). In political sociology, the term activism refers to action on behalf of a cause. Hence, activism is about doing, acting and making the action that brings change in society. It provides mobilization, supporting leadership and bringing the direction of the social action (Dumitrascu 2015). Acting may take different forms ranging from aggressive street protest to more moderate forms of peaceful petitioning in which claim-making features the core. In that sense, the term “Muslim Activism” in the Sri Lankan context signifies the practice of campaigning for separate and distinct group identity in line with a consciously articulated actions/efforts and program within and outside a formal political and institutional setting. In Sri Lanka, Muslim activism for separate identity construction has taken various forms, some civil and associational, some religious and some political, and so on. Modern Muslim activism was taken up in Sri Lanka in the late nineteenth century so that its impact has been felt there within the sphere of socio-economic and political today.

III. THE MUSLIMS OF SRI LANKA: A BRIEF SOCIO-ETHNOLOGICAL PROFILE

Sri Lanka is a multi-ethnic society in which Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims and others have co-existed for centuries. In an estimated population of 20.35 million in Sri Lanka, according to the 2012 census of March 2012, nearly 2 million or 9.7% are Muslims (Dept. of Census & Statistics 2012). The Muslims of Sri Lanka are ethnically categorized as Moors and Malays, and together they form the second-largest ethnic minority next to the Tamils. The ethnic identity of these Muslims is still one of the ‘ethnological conundrums’ as described by one of the early observers (Ali 2004, p372). Religiously, almost the entire community belongs to the Shafi School of the Sunni sect of Islam with the small sprinkling of Memons, Bohras and Khojas who are Shia Muslim found mainly in the capital city Colombo. Since the early 1950s, Islamic missionary movements are working on different platforms among Muslims. Tabiqh Jamaath, Jamaat e Islami and Tawheedh Jamaath are the three major movements of that kind among others (Maylvaganam 2008, 833-34).

The historical background of the Muslim community of Sri Lanka goes back to the pre-Islamic years of Arab trading and commercial activities in the Indian Ocean (Ali 1981). Arab contacts with Sri Lanka continued after the birth of Islam both directly from Arabia and through India-South India- and the Indian sub-continent. Further, there was also the Malay element whose origins may go back to the 13th century when the Malay prince Chandrabanu invaded the Island twice. There are about 50,000 Malays in Sri Lanka now. Hence, there are significant sub-ethnic divisions based on their place of origin. The Ceylon moors identify their origin from Arabian Peninsula while the Malays identify their origin from Malaysia, the Bohras

and Memons identify their origin from North India and the Indian moors identify their origin from South India (Haniffa 2010).

Being ethnically and culturally distinct group who live interspace among Sinhalese and Tamils, thus, the Muslim community of modern Sri Lanka originated from a variety of sources which renders them heterogeneous entity in terms of ethnicity, culture and language, though their religion-Islam-unites them all transcending those differences.

Economically, the Muslim community is historically portrayed as a business community. A significant section of the community was engaged in business up until independence enjoying predominance over the sector. However, owing to numerous measures taken by successive governments in the post-independence period, the Muslims lost their longstanding dominance in the business sector and like the Sinhalese and Tamils spread their interest to other areas.

Table 1

Population Distribution of Sri Lanka

Ethnicity	Population	Religion	Population
Sinhalese	15,250,081	Buddhist	14,272,056
Sri Lanka Tamils	2,269,266	Hindu	2,561,299
Indian Tamils	839,504	Islam	1,967,523
Sri Lanka Moor	1,892,638	Roman Catholic	1,261,194
Burgher	38,293	Other Christian	290,967
Malay	44,103	Other	6,400
Sri Lanka Chetty	5,595		
Bharatha	1,717		
Other	18,215		

Source: Department of Census and Statistics, Sri Lanka 2012

Table 2

Geographical Distribution of Muslims of Sri Lanka in comparison by Administrative District

District	Sinhalese	Tamils	Muslims	Other	Total
Ampara	252,458	112,457	281,702	2,785	649,402
Anuradhapura	782,808	4,728	70,692	2,347	860,575
Badulla	295,372	172,363	447,16	2,953	815,405
Batticaloa	6,797	383,008	2,078	2,908	526,567
Colombo	17,78,971	259,279	249,609	36,390	23,24,349
Galle	1,003,722	20,099	38,790	723	1,063,334
Gampaha	2,086,469	90,382	97,621	30,356	2,304,833
Hambantota	428,104	13,202	9,508	233	599,903
Jaffna	2,284	579,145	2,162	291	583,882

Kalutara	1,060,107	46,252	113,320	1,956	1,221,948
Kandy	1,023,488	154,321	191,570	6,003	1,375,382
Kegalle	718,309	61,609	59,997	673	840,648
Kurunegala	1,479,863	20,635	115,302	2,615	1,618,465
Mannar	2,305	80,795	16,436	34	99,570
Matale	391,305	47,517	44,786	923	484,531
Matara	767,580	20,899	25,254	315	814,048
Monaragala	428,104	13,207	9,508	239	45,1058
Mullaitivu	8,927	81,388	1,821	102	92,238
Nuwara Eliya	282,053	410,200	17,652	1,739	711,644
Polonnaruwa	368,197	7462	30,177	252	406,088
Puttalam	560,838	50,294	147,546	3,517	762,396
Ratnapura	947,811	116,581	22,346	1,289	10,88,007
Trincomalee	101,483	117,873	158,771	1,342	379,541
Vavuniya	17,138	143,123	11,748	106	172,115

Source: Department of Census & Statistics, Sri Lanka 2012

*In tables 1&2 the category of Tamils are taken together to denote both Sri Lankan Tamils and Tamils of Indian origin.

IV. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

As constructivists argue, identities are socially constructed and they are produced and reproduced in action and speech (Fearon and Laitin 2000 p846). Sri Lanka, a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-linguistic polity, had witnessed a long period of contention, competition and construction of identity along ethnic, religious and linguistic lines among its major ethnic groups-Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims- since the British colonial rule in the country in early 19th century. The process of the Muslim identity construction, on the other side, was relatively a complex one given the longevity and the multiplicity of the political context in which it was shaped and reshaped producing different Muslim identity. However, the rise of the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC) in the late 20th century as a social movement and a political party was a turning point in the process of Muslim identity construction. Insofar as, SLMC mobilized Muslim masses who were politically and ideologically divided, making them an independent entity with its destiny characterized primarily by religion and culture. In other words, the century-long quest for the construction of non-Tamil Muslim identity reached its peak point in which hitherto fluidity and overlapping aspects of the Muslim identity with 'Tamilness' category became reduced to 'hard category'.

In a nutshell, the process of Muslim(non-Tamil) identity construction exhibits the fact that the identity was invented and reinvented, mobilized and demobilized in reaction to the threat and challenge posed by other ethnic groups, specifically Tamils, over the century-long its existence(1833-1990s)(Ahmed 2012, 276). Similarly, the process evolved through three different phases (episode)-British colonial, early decades of independence and late 20th century- each characterizing differing political contexts that prevailed.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The past studies on Muslim identity formation in Sri Lanka seek to approach the subject from various perspectives ranging from sociological to cultural-linguistic to political and economic. Generally, they attempt to describe the history and development of separate Muslim identity by focusing mainly on the factors and dynamics affecting the construction and consolidation of the nonTamil Muslim identity during its century-long history. Depending on the type of perspective adopted, different studies capture different factors and dynamics influencing identity construction. For instance, sociological studies pay more attention to how social interaction at different levels contribute to shaping Muslim identity throughout its century-long history by changing the ethnic salience of the group(Muslims) between Arab ancestry, Muslim ethnicity and Islamic ethnoreligious singularity(McGilvary 1998; McGilvary and Raheem 2007). Studies adopted political perspective tend to trace the shifts in the character of the Muslim identity to the state policy(Imtiyas 2012 & 2011), while the studies from economic perspective explain economic policy of the government of the day played a major role in constructing and consolidating the various forms of the Muslim identity(Ali 2004). In accounting for the historical origins of the community, majority of the studies trace it back to the time Arab seafarers who used Sri Lanka as their resting place and the arrival of Arab traders even before the emergence of Islam in peninsular Arabia in the seventh century (Sukhri 1986; McGilvary 1998 & 2016; McGilvary and Raheem 2007; Devarajah 1994; Mohan 1987). These singular origins of the Muslim community of Sri Lanka are contested by studies that posit a diverse source underlying the origins of the Muslims (De Silva 1973; Ali 1981 & 1984; Azad 1993; Imtiyas and Hoole 2011; Nuhman 2002; Ahmad 2012). Depending on the manner the origins of the Muslim community is traced, the ethnic markers of Muslim identity also vary. While the studies of the single origins insist on the salience of religion (Islam) and Arab genealogical line in defining Muslim identity, the plural origins studies seek to explain the development of Muslim identity focusing on a mix of linguistic and socio-cultural sources(Ismail 1995; Mahroof 1995). However, most of the studies underscore different periods which the Muslim identity followed through during its century-long history. Of the periods, colonial, post-independence and civil war periods are crucial in shaping the Muslim identity at a different period (Samaraweera 1978; Mohan 1987; Andreas 2016; Uyangoda 2001). The evolving nature of the Muslim identity had produced varieties of identity to suit the need of the hour ranging from Arab-particularistic Moorish identity to pan Muslim identity to solid non-Tamil Muslim identity (Ali 1981; Ali 2004; Imtiyas and Hoole 2011; Ismail 1995; Mihlar 2009). The elite-level contestation between Tamil and Muslim leaders over political representation during the British colonial era produced a nonTamil Muslim identity characterizing elitist Moorish identity thus excluded most of the subgroups of the community(Nuhman 2002; McGilvary 2016; Andreas 2016; Haniffa 2013). The post-independence period marked by Sinhala-Tamil disagreement and contention over language policy and power-sharing contributed to gradual institutionalization of nonTamil Muslim identity along the religious line while politically and culturally both Tamils and Muslims shared many things in common(Ali 1984; Ali 2004; Mohan 1987; Ameerdeen 2006; Imtiyas 2011). The ethnic conflict which pitted Tamils and Muslims against each other in the peak of the armed fight between government forces and Tamil armed groups prompted Muslims of northeast Sri Lanka to distance themselves politically and culturally from the Tamils who wanted Muslims to submerge their ethnic identity with that of Tamils (Imtiyas 2011; Klem 2011; Andreas 2016; O'Sullivan 1997).

The existing studies on the construction and mobilization of the Muslim identity cover the whole range of history of the process, although the scope of the studies is limited to character and varieties of Muslim identity formed and produced in the different period over the history of Muslim identity construction. As a result, the existing scholarship misses out important other aspects and dimensions shaping the formation and mobilization of Muslim identity, which is primarily a social formation and thus, it is produced and reproduced over time. Therefore, there exists a lacuna in the current body of the empirical literature on Muslim identity construction in Sri Lanka as the literature rarely pays adequate and systematic attention to the role and impact of political and intuitional context in shaping Muslim identity.

The First Period (1832-1948)

During the first phase of the process, spanning from the early nineteenth century through the mid of twentieth century, politics in general and contentious politics, in particular, was pursued along the line of ethnicity and ethnic identity. However, the early contentious politics involved mainly ethnic Sinhalese (majority) and ethnic Tamils (minority) over political representation of their respective communities at the country's legislative council. Similarly, the Muslims, the third major ethnic group with strong trading orientation, were late to enter the scene as they were politically backward and less conscious in light of their boycott of modern education (English medium) fearing conversion to Christianity patronized by the British colonial rule(Nuhman 2002: Andreas 2016). Being a trading community who observed Islamic faith, Muslim leaders were much concerned about maintaining a close relationship with the British colonial administration to promote the interest of the Colombo-based mercantile elitist class. Political awakening along with class and communal consciousness sparked by the advent of modern education (English medium) and the communal representation for the Legislative Council in 1833 pushed both Sinhalese and Tamils to safeguard their respective class and communal interest (Andreas 2016).

While both Sinhalese (Sinhala-Buddhism) and Tamils(Tamil-Hinduism) qualified for the Council's representation as they were ethno-racial group with language, religion and culture of their own, kept Muslims out of the Council as they were mainly a religious group(Muhammadan) but spoke Tamil as their mother tongue(Nuhman 2002). This drove the British to choose a Tamil-Ponnambalam Ramanathan- to represent the Tamil speaking community including Muslims at the Council. However, this prompted strong resentment among Muslims who often preferred to identify them by their religion -Islam- over the language they spoke-Tamil (Andreas2016, 14: Uyangoda 2001, 120). In agitating for separate representation for them, the Muslim elite presented their case by emphasizing their distinct identity on the religion-Islam-they followed and the Arab ancestry as against the Hinduism and Dravidian ancestry that Tamils tend to trace to their ethnic genesis(Nuhman 2016,45). The continued attempt that Muslim elite made asserting their non-Tamilness identity amid stiff resistance from Tamil leadership that claimed Muslims are Tamils ethnologically finally succeeded when the British appointed a Muslim to the Council in 1888. The appointment of Muslim member thus marked the formation of 'the Ceylon Moorish' identity(Mihlar 2009: Ismail 1995, 7), a category which membership rules kept away other subgroups of the *Muhammadan* faith such as Coast/Indian Muslims, Malays, Bohra, Memon and Khoja(Nuhman 2002:McGilvray 2016:Andreas 2016,14: Haniffa 2013,175).

Table 3 Distribution of Muslim Population by Sub Group Identity, as of 2001

Muslim communities	Population	(%) Among Muslim Population
Sri Lankan Moor	1,561,812	96.42
Malay	47,998	2.96
Memon	7,000	0.43
Bohra	3,000	0.19
Total	1,619,810	100.00

Source: Ahmed 2012

The formation of the Ceylon Moor Union (1907) in an attempt to advance Moors interest represented by the mercantilist elite was an essential step toward the organized political action of the Muslims in the course of strengthening the separate non-Tamil Muslim identity along racial and religious line. Contributing to this process, the Muslim elite began publishing journals and newspapers such as Muslim Guardian and Muslim Nesain carrying news on the happenings in the broader Muslim world (Andreas 2016). Equally important, the Fez cap controversy of 1905-06 which contributed to organizing the first-ever mass protest by the Muslim leaders against the ban on the wearing of Fez cap in court resulted in the lifting of the ban (Devaraja 1994, 154; Andreas 2016, 15; Fazil 2005, 116). However, the 1915 Sinhala-Muslim riot and the anti-Muslim stance taken by Tamil leadership during which by attempting to defend Sinhala leaders/perpetrators, and the creation of the Ceylon National Congress (CNC) in 1919 jointly by Sinhalese and Tamils excluding Muslims prompted the Muslim leadership to strengthen the 'Moorish' identity to assert Muslims were a group distinct from others in order to check the threat and challenge from the Tamil leadership.

The Second Period (1948-1980s)

The mid-twentieth century, the second period of the Muslim identity construction, was the period of demobilizing Muslim identity within itself in order to embody larger segments of the community-Urban, rural, coastal, Indian& Malays and Borahs- that were hitherto left out by the 'Moorish' category (Ali 2004 p13). Similarly, it was also a period of institutionalization under the state patronage in the context of growing Sinhalese-Tamil conflict in which Muslim leadership took side with Sinhalese by openly supporting the latter's attempt to marginalize Tamils in the country's socio-economic and political fronts. The Muslim leadership's unconditional support to certain government's measures toward that end-1956 Sinhala Only Act & 1971 University Admission Policy-encouraged the government to reciprocate Muslims with concessions and privileges, particularly on religious-cultural matters. For instance, government supported to establish Muslim Schools and other educational institutions, recruited and appointed Muslim teachers including Muslim *Moulavi* teachers, allowed Arabic and Islam to be incorporated into the national school curriculum (Ali 1984, 302; Mohan 1987, 51; Ameerdeen 2006, 97). Meanwhile, the stance taken by Muslim leadership on Official Language issue divided the community along the linguistic line where southwest Muslims chose Sinhala as their medium of instruction while northeast Muslims stuck to Tamil as their mother tongue and medium of instruction thereby plunging the community into identity crisis (Mohan 1987). Similarly, on the field of electoral politics also they differed from each other to the extent that southwest Muslims aligned with major national parties, whereas their northeast counterpart aligned most of the time with Tamil parties (Ali 2004, 15:

Mohan 1987, 37; Imtiyas 2011, 222). However, there remained close links between the Muslims of these two regions along the religious line which made possible for southwest Muslim politicians to be returned to parliament from east through major national parties (De Silva 1986).

V. POLITICAL AND INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT PREVAILED AND ITS IMPACT ON SEPARATE MUSLIM IDENTITY

The central question of the study that "why Muslim identity became 'hard category' particularly in the late 1980s when the Muslim activism for separate group identity started as early as in the mid-19th century" is analyzed against the main assumption of POS. According to which, contentious actors' access to public sphere and political decision making is also governed by institutional values that reinforce pattern of interaction between government and interest groups and electoral laws.

The identity construction literature argues that once identities are formed, political actors regularly use them as part of contentious politics, attempting to reduce fluid and overlapping identity relations. In Sri Lanka, the contentious politics along ethnicity began to be evident in the early nineteenth century when the British colonial rule brought in Legislative Council in 1833 in which representation was constituted along the racial line. As the native races of the country, only the Sinhalese and Tamils were represented in the first Council while Muslims were left out, though they were too a native population. Instead, they were represented by the Tamil member simply because they also spoke the language-Tamil- that Tamils spoke, although the British treated Muslims from the beginning religiously and culturally different people through the proclamation and royal decree even before the constitution of the Legislative Council (Deverajah 1994). The Muslim's agitation for separate representation in the Council by petitioning to Colonial administration and engaging in public and intellectual discourses insisting on their separate identity along Arab racial and Islamic faith line led to the first official recognition of their separate identity by the British in 1888 by appointing a Muslim representative to the Council. Since then the Muslim identity evolved through multiple stages taking various shapes during its century-long process which reached the decisive point of its existence by making the category(Muslim identity)relatively concrete thereby less disputed, if not outright unchallenged.

The first phase (1833-1948), the period of political awakening, witnessed the growing political consciousness among Muslims, particularly the urban mercantile elite class who hitherto remained either passive or indifferent in political action. Political action by Muslims toward securing representation in the Council along racial and religious lines amid stiff resistance from strong Tamil leadership was the first building block laid in the course of constructing Muslim identity. The identity articulated during this phase was more like class identity than communal identity, meaning the membership rules of the identity exhibited to a large extent the 'Moorish' elements of the larger members of the Islamic faith. Therefore, the Muslim identity which the elite articulated was the exclusive 'Ceylon Moorish' leaving out the subgroups such as Coast/ Indian Muslims, Malays, Borah, Memon and Khoja. Besides, the occurrence of certain events linked to the existent regime type at the time contributed to the strengthening of the identity. Religious revival among native religions, including Islam and political participation, were among others. That is, the Islamic revival in the late 19th century in the context of a parallel resurgence in Buddhism and Hinduism as resistance to Christian proselytizing, and western culture as an attempt to reform

their native ones led to the awakening of Muslims spiritually and culturally. The movement's urge on the need for Muslims to keep themselves out of English medium education while encouraging them to seek Islamic religious education (mainly at Arabic *madarasa*) was an attempt at preserving the community's religious and cultural identity.

Political participation was another important event in the development of Muslim identity. Compared to the other two major ethnic groups-Sinhalese and Tamils- the political activism and the resulting political participation of Muslims, particularly at elite level came late as they were mainly preoccupied with trade. The growing political consciousness among the other two communities, nevertheless, prompted the Muslims to abandon their indifference toward politics. The establishment of government and governmental apparatus especially representation-both communal and territorial-compelled Muslim mercantilist elite to involve themselves in politics by way of being electors and elected (representative), in order to protect and promote their class interest, if not communal interest. The introduction of Universal Adult Franchise in 1931, however, enabled the ordinary masses to take part in politics through their ballot power that in turn strengthened the position of Muslim elite as the community leaders to promote their class interest. On the other side, the Muslim leadership's willingness to politically cooperate with Sinhala leadership in its(Sinhalese) attempt to marginalize the Tamils for their demands for equal status with Sinhalese which the latter viewed perilous for their dominance of the polity in general made them to be given important cabinet portfolios(Education Minister and Foreign Minister among others). Besides, the Muslim leadership's pragmatic approach in addressing community grievances by presenting them as 'concession for the backward community' was seen by Sinhala leadership as less demanding. Consequently, successive governments supported Muslim welfare particularly in education and cultural fields by establishing Government Muslim schools and Training Colleges, the appointment of Muslim teachers, incorporating Islam and Arabic language into national government curriculum that helped to institutionalize the identity.

The break out of Sinhala-Muslim riot in 1915 triggered by the preponderance and dominance of Muslims as a trading community and the conduct of Tamil elite during and after the violence defending Sinhala leaders (perpetrators) made Muslims feel that Tamils were plotting against them to marginalize politically and economically. The heavy loss that Muslims suffered during the riot forced them to reconsider their course of action in conducting communal affairs amid increased threat and challenge from Tamil leadership. It was in this background that the exclusive 'Moorish' identity shifted to inclusive 'Muslim' identity with the view of checking the threat and challenge from Tamil leadership.

Equally important, the events occurred in the broader Islamic world in the early decades of independence of the country such as 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran were particularly important as it did elsewhere to profoundly impact the Muslim community in terms of religion and culture. The change of attire from traditional *saree* (for women) and *jubbah* (for men) became common among both urban and rural Muslim population, signifying the beginning of disowning the Tamil cultural symbols. Similarly, the arrival of Islamic *Dawa* (missionary) movements in the 1960s in the country and their involvement in educating the Islamic way of living had a significant impact on the spiritual and cultural life of the Muslim community by keeping it within the Islamic atmosphere and thus discouraging Muslims from falling into heretical acts.

Therefore, the process of Muslim identity construction had progressed through a long path with the span of more than

a century during which the identity was invented and reinvented in response to the changes occurred in the political and cultural context, especially in relations to the political action of the Tamil leadership. The early attempt by Muslim elite to construct the Muslim identity set the community against the 'Tamilness' category triggering contentious political actions which shaped the nature and scope of the relationship between Tamils and Muslims, the two major minority groups, in all the three episodes of the process(identity construction and mobilization) beginning from mid-nineteenth century through late 1980s.

VI. THE EMERGENCE OF SLMC AND THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE MUSLIM IDENTITY

This dichotomous character - politically and linguistically- associated with the Muslim identity continued until the late 1980s when the process entered the next stage (third episode) which characterized relatively complex socio-political context. The emergence of Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC) in the mid-1980s and the subsequent Muslim collective political action was the outcome of the convergence of both distal and proximate factors. Given the relative impact on the process of Muslim identity mobilization, however, some of the essential proximate factors, i.e., the ethnic conflict and related violence, is treated in detail here, among others. In the context of heightened Sinhala-Tamil conflict which served the most decisive factor in pushing the Muslim community (northeast), which hitherto remained politically passive and ethnically dormant to mobilize itself around SLMC, asserting its distinct identity- the non-Tamils. SLMC's political activism to politicize the Muslim masses employing strategies acquainted to social movements and the resultant electoral success as a political party vividly indicated that Muslims were more willing to assert their non-Tamil identity in the face of Tamil political leaderships' repeated calling of the Muslims as members of the Tamil nation(Imtiyas 2011:Klem 2011,740). This state of affair appears corresponding to the understanding held by the contentious politics literature that identities could crystallize in relation to changes in the political and cultural context (Tarrow 2013, 143).

Another crucial factor contributing to this development was the security threat faced by northeast Muslims at the hands of Tamil armed group in the peak of the ethnic conflict in the early 1990s. The indifference of the southwest Muslim leadership and the inability of the local political leaders affiliated with national political parties to the plight of the northeast Muslims created a vacuum of leadership which can effectively protect the rights and interests of the Muslims. Seizing the opportunity, SLMC's mobilized Muslims-especially northeast- by educating them of the need to have a powerful political organization of their own to address security concerns and socio-economic grievances, in turn, activated the hitherto dormant non-Tamil Muslim identity among the northeast Muslims. The result was SLMC gaining historic overwhelming electoral support from the community first in the newly constituted North-East Provincial Council Elections in 1988 where SLMC would emerge the main opposition and the 1989 General Elections in which SLMC won four seats out of total eleven seats contested in the eastern province (Ameerdeen 2006, 141).

The spectacular performance of SLMC in those two elections while estranged the Muslims politically from Tamils almost outright undermined the personal and party clout of the traditional Muslim leadership (major national parties) upon northeast Muslims severely. On top of it, the miraculous entry of SLMC into the mainstream politics in 1994 with seven parliamentary seats enabled it to wield substantial bargain power to secure key cabinet portfolios as SLMC's support was

critically needed to form and run the government of the day. With wielding lucrative cabinet portfolios, SLMC was able to expand its political activity to the southwest region where it could garner a significant amount of support among Muslims who never had been exposed to an ethnic Muslim party before in light of their scattered nature among Sinhalese throughout the country (Ameerdeen 2006, 142). The stunning electoral success of the SLMC became possible when the leadership negotiated an electoral pact with then ruling party at the center in 1988 in which the SLMC made a winning demand for lowering the threshold point of the electoral system (PR) from 12.5% to 5% so that smaller party like SLMC can get entry into national legislature and thereby mainstream politics (Ameerdeen 2006, 141). Upon winning its demand, SLMC successfully contested its first national-level elections in 1989, enabling it to make significant inroads in the national politics. In particular, its performance in the subsequent national-level elections in 1994 made it to become the limelight in the entire politics of the country. On the other side, the most extreme outcome produced by SLMC's electoral success was its claim for a separate autonomous region for the northeast Muslims. The claim was an explicit attempt at solidifying the distinct interests and aspirations of the Muslim community, regardless of their linguistic bond and ties with Tamils (Andreas 2016; Klem 2011; O'Sullivan 1997).

Table 4
1988 North Eastern Provincial Council Election

Party	Eastern			Northern			Total		
	Votes	%	Seats	Votes	%	Seats	Votes	%	Seats
Eelam People's revolutionary Liberation Front	215,230	55.00%	17			24	215,230	55.00%	41
Sri Lanka Muslim Congress	168,038	42.94%	17				168,038	42.94%	17
United National Party	8,056	2.06%	1				8,056	2.06%	1
Eelam National Democratic Liberation Front						12			12
Total	391,324	100.00%	35			36	391,324	100.00%	71

Source: Tamil Times 1988

The activation of 'non-Tamilness' identity by SLMC by mobilizing Muslims-northeast- under its clout and thus unifying the Muslims of the country politically and culturally contributed to the Muslim identity become a composite one in which external boundary was formed, reducing the hitherto fluid and overlapping relations with 'Tamilness' category. Insofar as, both Tamils and Muslims had been embarking on their political journey separately and independently following SLMC gained a foot in the northeast and there had existed almost zero political cooperation and electoral coalition among the two for the most of the period following the advent of SLMC. In short, mobilization of Muslims-northeast-around SLMC along strong religious and cultural lines narrowed the gulf between 'ascriptive' and 'descriptive' dimensions of the Muslim identity, signifying the near-crystallization of the category. This is in line with the argument advanced by the contentious politics literature that identities are activated and changed through interaction between actors that are crystallized during 'troubled times'.

Table 5

SLMC at Parliamentary Elections (1989 – 2000)

Year	Votes	Seats
1989	202,016	4
1994	143,307	7
2000	197,983	11
2001	105,346	5

Source: Wikipedia and Batcha 2015, Devotta 2003)

*in 2000 SLMC contested certain electoral districts under National Unity Alliance (NUA)

For the sake of understanding, we can rush to summarize the entire process of Muslim identity construction and mobilization in Sri Lanka into the following. The process comprises the collective political action performed in three different phases (episodes) - the colonial period, early independence period and late 1980s period. While the first was a period of articulation of identity, the second was the period of institutionalization of identity. As for the third, it was the period of identity activation to its fullest potential.

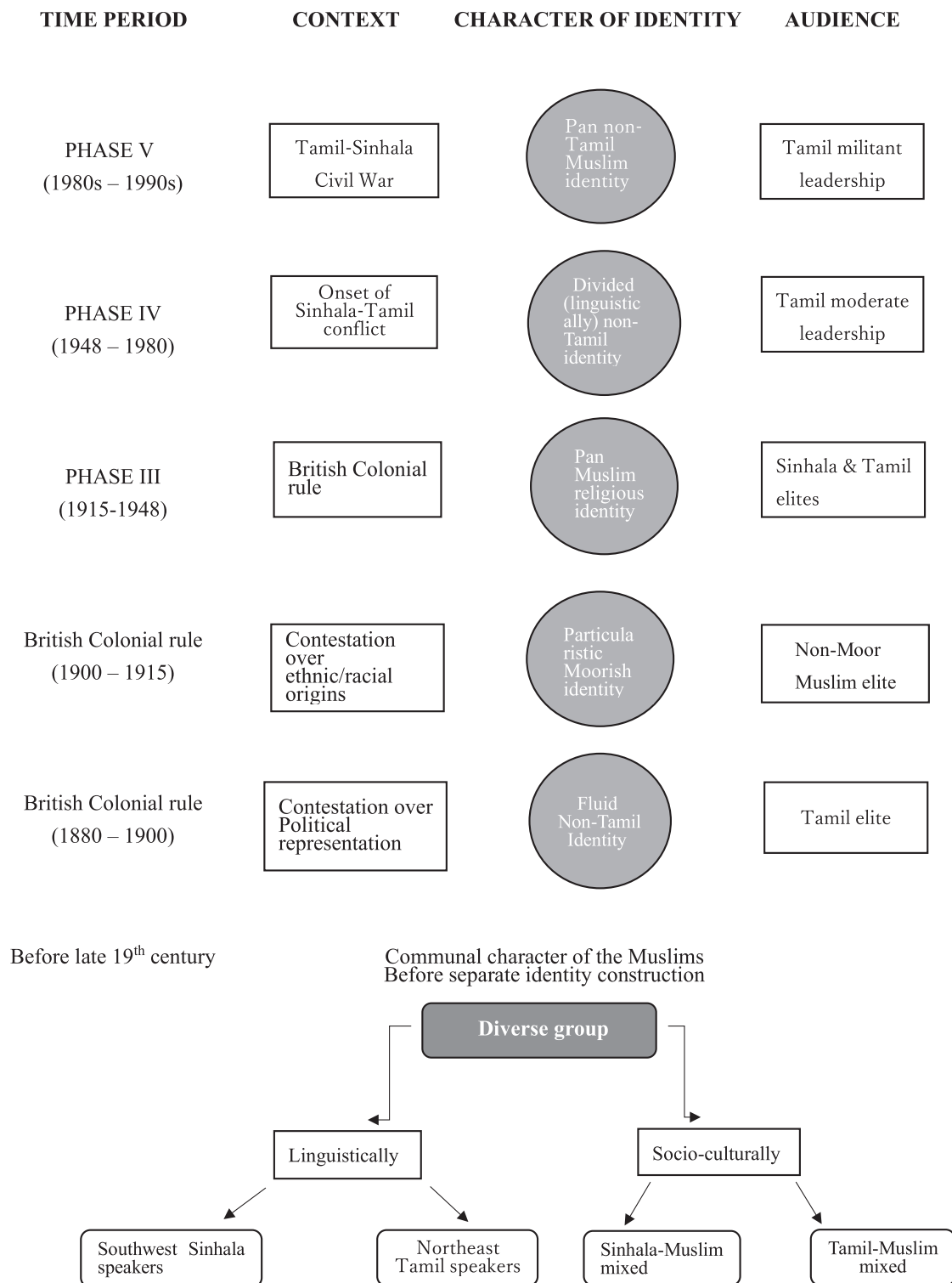
The layering of Muslim identity and inner heterogeneity

According to the constructionist view, people's conception of themselves along ethnic lines, especially their ethnic identity, to be situational and changeable (Waters 1990 Chapter Two as quoted in Nagel 1994). Barth (1969) argues that ethnicity is the product of social ascriptions, a kind of labelling process engaged in by oneself and others. As the group moves through daily life, ethnicity can change according to variations in the situations and audiences encountered. Since ethnicity changes situationally, the individual/group carries a portfolio of ethnic identities that are more or less salient in various situations and vis-à-vis various audiences thus producing a "layering" of identities (Nagel 1994, 154). Given the various forms of separate identity that Muslim activism produced during its century-long history, it becomes apparent that Muslim activism at different period would produce the differing character of separate Muslim identity in that racial and religious attributes dislocated ethnic(linguistic and cultural) salience in response to particular situation/context and the audiences encountered. For instance, during the British colonialism, Muslim activists in their attempt to secure separate political representation at State Council invoked their Arab ancestry and lineage in support of their repudiation of the Tamil's claim that Muslims are ethnologically Tamils.

The emergence of SLMC as a social movement simultaneously (politically) challenged the traditional Muslim political leadership on the one hand and (ideologically) the Tamil militant leadership for its aggression on the Muslims on other hands by promoting and promulgating distinct collective Muslim identity along ethnoreligious line. The discursive context shaped both by the political and economic plight of northeast

Muslims coupled with the victimhood sentiment at the hands of combatants from both sides during the civil war

Figure 1 The layering character of the Muslim identity in Sri Lanka



source: Author

VII. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Muslims of Sri Lanka is an ethnic group/social category primarily defined by religion as against the usual common criteria of language and culture which define the other two ethnic groups-Sinhalese and Tamils- of the country. Defining their ethnic identity by religion-Islam, Muslims had experienced both positive and negative repercussions depending on the political contexts prevailed in which they (Muslim elite/leaders) articulated their separate and distinct ethnic identity mainly from that of Tamil identity. The challenge and threat the Muslims faced and perceived from 'Tamils in an attempt to co-opt them into larger 'Tamilness' category was dealt differently in the three identified periods/episodes of the Muslim identity construction. During the first period, the challenge and threat were mostly intellectual and political, and therefore, the response and reaction of the Muslim leadership resorted to was largely also the same. The second period, however, involved purely a political challenge requiring the Muslim elite to adopt the strategy of taking side with the majority Sinhalese and aligning with national political parties. As for the third and the last period saw the challenge and threat, which was neither intellectual nor pure political. Instead, it was more ideological with coercive and violent overtones. On the other side, the choice of strategy Muslim leadership made and the impact of Muslim collective action on the state policy concerning representation and affirmative action program was profoundly affected by different political and institutional environments existed during these periods.

The British colonial political system, the first episode, by introducing communal representation system communalized the political and electoral competition whereby institutionalized communal identities, including the Muslim ones. As a result, different social groups were compelled to identify themselves as a separate ethnic group distinct from and independent of other groups in order to increase their chances of securing representation in the State Council. In the case of Sinhalese and Tamils, they were successful from the beginning in articulating themselves as distinct ethnic groups entitled for separate representation. However, Muslims were not so in the outset as they were widely considered as being part of Tamil ethnicity. The repeated attempt to construct separate Muslim identity distinguishing Muslims from Tamils culminated in the Ceylon Moorish identity in which Arab ancestry and Islam were the prime identity markers thus deliberately excluded various other sub social groups such as Malays and Coast or Indian Muslims whose religion was Islam too.

The political system prevailed during the independence decades exhibited a different type of opportunities and constraint for the collective action in which both openness and repression of the political institutions shaped the outcome of attempts to construct the Muslim identity. While the system exhibited an openness to Muslim collective action, it remained comparatively repressive to Tamils' collective action. That is, the policies and programs of the regimes during the period specifically the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) led government tacitly discriminated against Tamils while patronizing Muslim interests and grievances, although Muslim leadership was not that articulate compared to other two periods (episodes). Therefore, the gains that Muslim collective action made during the period was rather a result of the regime's spontaneous affirmative action out of its intention to estranging Muslims from Tamils.

The political and institutional environment existent during the third period, however, presented the most conducive context encouraging collective political action by politically and ethnically less conscious masses of Muslims. The electoral

system (PR) in place was the foremost, such opportunity driving the SLMC led Muslim collective action to mobilize and unify Muslims around a common destiny- non- Tamil Muslim identity- to culminate in the crystallization of the identity. Realizing the potential of a smaller party like SLMC to emerge as a significant force in the regional and national politics alike, a scenario which was never possible under previous electoral systems (FPTP), middle class educated youth under a determined and strategic leadership seized the opportunity to politicize the masses on ethnoreligious line. The most relevant point to this effect was that, as the POS concept corroborates that the power configuration and ensuing conflict within the elite, then UNP government's desperate need for Muslim support to successfully contest the presidential election which followed the north-east Provincial Council elections in 1988. Sensing this, the SLMC rushed to strike a deal with the government regarding the lowering of the cut off points of the electoral system which would ensure SLMC of entry into the national parliament. Winning four seats in its debut in 1989 and seven in 1994 elections, SLMC made an enormous achievement while being a small and minority party which took everyone in the political quarters with surprise. The successive electoral performance, while allowed Muslim to wield substantial political power in their hands, strengthen their sentiment of being a distinct entity independent of Tamil dominance and discrimination.

Therefore, it can be safely argued that social/ethnic divisions are not simply reflected in politics neither are they merely the result of strategic action. They are created within formal and informal political context when social groups compete for access to power, resources and political representation along ethnicity and group identity. In this process, it was the political opportunity structure which conditioned the strategy and outcome of Muslim identity activism by acting both as resources and constraints in shaping the nonTamil Muslim identity thus producing the layering of Muslim identity. However, the Muslim quest for nonTamil Muslim identity reached its peak when northeast Muslims finally mobilized themselves around SLMC which later would provide political leadership to Sri Lankan Muslims in general thus unifying the community under singular common ethnoreligious identity which hitherto remained elusive. This corroborates the claim by McGarry(2008) that ethnic identity, though contested, provides a sense of solidarity and allows for the construction of shared interests.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The process of Muslim identity construction, in general, passed through various political contexts that significantly differed from one another in terms of opportunities and constraints they imposed on the political action of the contentious actors- mainly Tamil and Muslim elites. The type of political context of different phases (episode) affected the shaping and reshaping of the Muslim identity from one label (Moorish) to another (Muslim) by constraining the options of strategy and the content of discourses of the contentious actors. The identity shift from 'Moorish' to 'Muslim' vividly informs the fact that by engaging in political action elites mobilized, manipulated and even invented identities to suit their purposes. In doing so, Muslim ethnic identity was defined not by the cultural characteristics of the Muslims but by the differences thought to distinguish them from the Tamils. SLMC served as the human agency which effectively made use of the opportunities posed by the political context to mobilize the Muslim identity around the non-Tamil category, which hitherto remained elusive in the case of northeast Muslims. This, in turn, affects efforts to resolve Sinhala-Tamil conflict based on power-sharing.

Finally, the socio-political circumstances prevailed in the three periods (episodes) affected the shaping of the Muslim

identity from exclusive-parochial 'Moorish' one to loose-inclusive 'Muslim' one to solid-inclusive 'Muslim' one. To be precise, in the first period of the Muslim collective action, the British 'divide and rule' tactic/policy was instrumental in granting the Muslim claim for separate representation at the State Council in the face of stiff Tamils' resistance and refutation. Likewise, the anti-Tamil attitude among Sinhalese masses and the anti-Tamil government policies and programs alike provided favourable conditions for Muslims to strengthen their identity in the fields of education-both religious and secular- at the expense of Tamils rights, privileges and concessions. On top of it, the convergence of conducive political and institutional factors in the third episode(civil war period) enabling SLMC to politically mobilize northeast Muslims around a solid non-Tamil Muslim identity in the backdrop of Sinhala-Tamil conflict viably distanced the Muslims of Sri Lanka socio-culturally and politically from the Tamils.

References

- Abdul Azeed, I. L. M. 1957. *A Criticism of Mr. Ramanathan's "Ethnology of the 'Moors' of Ceylon."* Colombo: Moors' Islamic Cultural Home.
- Ahmad, Zarin. 2012. "Contours of Muslim Nationalism in Sri Lanka." *South Asian History and Culture* 3 (2): 269–87.
- Ali, Ameer. 1981. "The Genesis of the Muslim Community in Ceylon (Sri Lanka): A Historical Summary." *Asian Studies* XIX: 65-82.
- . 1984. "Islamic Revivalism in Harmony and Conflict: The Experience in Sri Lanka and Malaysia." *Asian Survey* 24 (3): 296–313.
- . 1986. "Politics of Survival: Past Strategies and Present Predicament of the Muslim Community in Sri Lanka." *Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs* 7 (1): 147–70.
- . 2004. "The Muslims of Sri Lanka: An Ethnic Minority Trapped in a Political Quagmire." *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 5 (3): 372–83.
- Ameerdeen, Vellaithamby. 2006. *Ethnic Politics of Muslims in Sri Lanka*. Kandy, Sri Lanka: Centre for Minority Studies.
- Azad, Kamil M. N. M. 1993. *The Muslims of Sri Lanka under the British Rule*. New Delhi: Navrang Publishing House.
- Barth, Fredrick. 1969. *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries the Social Organization*. Boston: Little Brown & Company.
- Batcha, Bisthan. 2015. *The Impact of Electoral Reforms on the Sri Lanka Muslim Community*.
- De Silva, K.M. 1986. *Managing Ethnic Tensions in Multi Ethnic Societies: Sri Lanka 1880-1985*. Lanham MD: University Press of America
- . 1973. *Nineteenth Century Origins of Nationalism in Ceylon*. Colombo: Colombo Apothecaries Company Limited.
- Department of Census and Statistics, Government of Sri Lanka website, available on:
<http://www.statistics.gov.lk/PopHouSat/CPH2012Visualization/htdocs/index.php?usecase=indicator&action=Map&indId=10>
- Devotta, Niel. 2003. "Sri Lanka Political Decay: Analyzing the October 2000 and December 2001 Parliamentary Elections." *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 41 (2): 115-142.
- Dewaraja, Lorna Srimathie. 1994. *The Muslims of Sri Lanka: One Thousand Years of Ethnic Harmony, 900-1915*. Colombo: Lanka Islamic Foundation.
- Dumitraşcu, Veronica. 2015. "Social Activism: Theories and Methods." *Revista Universitara De Sociologie* XI (1): 84-94.
- Fazil, M. M. 2005. "The Muslim Factor in the Sri Lankan Conflict", in G. Frerks and B. Klem (ed) *Dealing with Diversity: Sri Lankan Discourse on Peace and Conflict*. Hague: The Netherlands Institute of International Relations.
- Faslan, Mohamed, and Nadine Vanniasinkam. 2015. *Fracturing Community: Intra-group Relations among the Muslims of Sri Lanka*. Colombo: International Centre for Ethnic Studies.
- Fearon, James D., and David D. Laitin. 2000. "Violence and the Social Construction of Ethnic Identity." *International Organization* 54 (4): 845–77.
- Gellner, David N. 2009. *Ethnic Activism and Civil Society in South Asia*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Haniffa, Ruvaiz. 2010. *Sri Lankan Muslim Minority: A Bridge to Harmony*. IHSN Survey Catalog.
- Holt, John Clifford. 2016. *Buddhist Extremists and Muslim Minorities: Religious Conflict in Contemporary Sri Lanka*. Oxford University Press.
- Imtiyaz, A. R. M. 2009. "The Eastern Muslims of Sri Lanka: Special Problems and Solutions." *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 44 (4): 407–27.

- . 2013. "Identity, Choices and Crisis: A Study of Muslim Political Leadership in Sri Lanka." *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 48 (1): 47–63.
- Imtiyaz, A. R. M., and S. R. H. Hoole. 2011. "Some Critical Notes on the Non-Tamil Identity of the Muslims of Sri Lanka, and on Tamil–Muslim Relations." *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 34 (2): 208–31.
- International Crisis Group. 2007. *Sri Lanka's Muslims: Caught in the Crossfire*. ICG Asia Report No. 134.
- Ismail, Qadri M. 1995. "Unmooring identity: The Antinomies of Elite Muslim Self-Representation in Modern Sri Lanka," in Ismail, Qadri M. and Jeganathan, P. (ed.) *Unmaking the Nation*. Colombo: SSA.
- Johansson, Andreas. 2016. "Pragmatic Muslim Politics : The Case of Sri Lanka Muslim Congress." PhD diss. Lund University.
- Klem, Bart. 2011. "Islam, Politics and Violence in Eastern Sri Lanka." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 70 (3): 730–53.
- Mahroof, M. M. M. 1995. "Spoken Tamil Dialects of the Muslims of Sri Lanka: Language as Identity Classifier." *Islamic Studies* 34 (4): 407–426.
- Mayilvaganan, M. 2008. "The Muslim Factor in the Sri Lankan Ethnic Conflict." *Strategic Analysis*, 32(5): 833–853.
- McGarry, Aidan. 2008. "Ethnic Group Identity and the Roma Social Movement: Transnational Organizing Structures of Representation." *Nationalities Papers* 36 (3): 449–70.
- McGilvary, Dennis B. 2016. Rethinking Muslim Identity in Sri Lanka in John Clifford Holts (ed) *Buddhist Extremists and Muslim Minorities: Religious Conflict in Contemporary Sri Lanka*. Oxford University Press.
- . 2011. Sri Lankan Muslims: Between Ethno-nationalism and the Global *Umma*. *Nations and Nationalism* 17(2) 45–64.
- and Raheem, Mirak. 2011. "Origins of the Sri Lankan Muslims and Varieties of Muslim Identities" in John Clifford Holt's ed. *the Sri Lanka Reader: History, Culture and Politics*. London: Duke University Press.
- and Raheem, Mirak. 2007. Muslim Perspective on the Sri Lankan Conflict. *Policy Studies* 41. Washington: East-West Centre
- . 1998. Arabs, Moors and Muslims: Sri Lankan Muslim Identity in regional Perspective. *Contribution to Indian Sociology*. 32 (2). 433–483.
- DOI: 10.1177/006996679803200213
- Mihlar, Farah. 2009. "The State of Sri Lanka's Muslims." *Economic and Political Weekly* 44 (38).
- Mohan, R. Vasundhara. 1987. *Identity Crisis of Sri Lankan Muslims*. New Delhi: Mittal Publications.
- Nagel, Joane. 1994. "Constructing Ethnicity: Creating and Recreating Ethnic Identity and Culture." *Social Problems* 41 (1): 152–176.
- Nuhman, M. A. 2002. *Understanding Sri Lankan Muslim Identity*. Colombo: International Centre for Ethnic Studies.
- . 2013. *Language and Education of Sri Lankan Muslims: Problems and Prospects*. Colombo: Azeez Foundation.
- . 2016. "Sinhala Buddhist Nationalism and Muslim Identity in Sri Lanka", in John Clifford Holt, ed., *Buddhist Extremists and Muslim Minorities: Religious Conflict in Contemporary Sri Lanka*.
- O'Sullivan, Meghan. 1997. "Conflict as a Catalyst: The Changing Politics of the Sri Lankan Muslims." *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 20 (s1): 281–308.
- Romanucci-Ross, Lola, and George A. de Vos. 1995. *Ethnic Identity: Creation, Conflict, and Accommodation*. London: Sage Publication.
- Samarweera, Vivaya. 1978. "Some Sociological Aspects of the Muslim Revivalism in Sri Lanka." *Social Compass*, 3(4): 465–475. Accessed October 30, 2019. doi:10.1177/003776867802500310
- Shukri, M. A. M. 1986. *Muslims of Sri Lanka: Avenues to Antiquity*. Jamia Naleemia Inst.
- Spencer, Jonathan. 2012. Performing Democracy and Violence, Agonism and Community, Politics and not Politics in Sri Lanka. In *Geoforum*. 43 (4). 725–731
- doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2012.03.001
- Tamil Times. 1988. "Election Results." VIII (I): 4 December
- Tarrow, Sidney. 2013. *The Language of Contention: Revolutions in Words 1688–2012*. Cambridge University Press.
- Vermeersch, Peter. 2011. "Theories of Ethnic Mobilization: Overview and Recent Trends." *CRPD Working Paper* No. 3, Centre for Research on Race and Development, University of Leuven.
- Yusoff, Mohammad Agus, Athambawa Sarjoon, Nordin Hussin, Mohammad Ghazali Zainal Abidin, and Azhar Ahmad. 2016. "Ethnicity, Minority and Groups Consciousness: An Examination of the Ethnic Group Formation of Sri Lankan Muslims through Conceptual Analysis." *Social Sciences (Pakistan)* 11 (7): 1322–30.